

Botanical Discoveries No.5 (2003)

Bob Ellis 2004

Three 'new' vascular plants 'turned up' at Wheatfen up this year. Ted had recorded Arrowhead, *Sagittaria sagittifolia*, during his 1934 survey of what is now the reserve, but it had not been seen recently until it was discovered in Crake's Dyke this year by our observant warden. Late in autumn, I came across a small tuft of Bristle Club-rush, *Isolepis setacea*, in the south-west corner of Surlingham Wood - is this another consequence of the coppicing work? Earlier in the year, Fred Rumsey of the Natural History Museum found Hard Shield-Fern, *Polystichum aculeatum*, amongst the willows, deep in Pool Carr - and this leads me rapidly on to the mossy part of this report.

Fred was here, along with many other national moss and liverwort specialists, as part of the British Bryological Society's spring excursion. With so many expert eyes on the prowl, it was hardly surprising that several 'new' bryological finds were made. It was Fred who found the Many-flowered Leskea, *Pylasia polyantha* on the edges of Pool Carr. Having been shown the characteristics of this pretty little pleurocarp, several others made their own discoveries of it in other parts of the Pool area. Lyell's Bristle-moss, *Orthotrichum lyellii*, was reported from two localities. This was particularly pleasing as Ted had recorded it in the past, but the only indication I have of his record is a pencil mark in one of his copies of Nicholson's Flora of Norfolk.

Chris Preston spotted another epiphytic moss that I thought ought to be present, but which had always eluded me, namely *Ulota phyllantha*. This species has been honoured with the rather apt English name 'Frizzled Pincushion'. Many of our guests had come to see *Timmia megapolitana*, which, in this country, is presently unique to Wheatfen - thanks go to David Griffin who had a busy day ferrying people across to the main colony on the edge of Pool Carr. *Timmia* was also found by Mark Hill in a new locality to the west of Wheatfen Broad. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, mature fruits of *Timmia* were found for the first time, by both Chris Preston and Ron Porley.